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Document No. 12.

CAPITULOS de carta á S. M. del Virey de Nueva España de 26 de Noviembre de 1597 en que hace relacion del discurso y estado tocante al descubrimiento de las Californias y de algunas particularidades que de nuevo se han entendido.

Porque vuestra magestad me manda en las cartas que rescebi este año, que de relacion del subceso que tuvo el viaje de las Californias y porque pueda venir en la flota horden de lo que cerca de este negocio se deva hazer de nuevo será necesario decir en particular el estado que tiene y las dubdas que se ofrecen en este negocio. En el segundo aviso que partió por marzo y en el despacho general di quenta á vuestra magestad del subceso que tuvo la jornada y señaladamente de la esperiencia que havia dado Sebastian Vizcaino de que junto de ser platico en esta mar del sur y hombre sosegado y de muy sano pecho y yntencion, tenia algun mediano y vastante caudal en lo que yo no esperaba del ningnno ques en la capacidad para regir su gente y brio para hazerse respetar della, cossa que raras veces se halla faltando autoridad en el sugeto. Dixe por esto á vuestra magestad en el capitulo de la carta que escrivi este año sobre materias de guerra, que por este concepto que forme por la esperiencia de lo pasado contra el que antes havia hecho por discursso y por ser acabada la ocasion con su buelta no usava de la cedula en que vuestra magestad vistas mis cartas me envió á mandar que quitase los despachos á este hombre ; despues con motivo que dió para ello el haver otros que hablasen en hacer asiento escluyendo yo del todo á Vizcayno, comuniqué el acuerdo de esta real audiencia el estado del negocio y presente el fiscal que tambien vió en su casa los papeles, y haviendolo conferido todo pareció que aunque este descubrimiento no se temiera de yntil como he escripto á vuestra magestad otras veces, yo no podría ejecutarle por medio de Vizcayno ni de otra persona sin horden de vuestra magestad y aprovacion que fuese servido hazer del asiento como tampoco dicen propuso el Virrey Don Luis de Velazco dar patentes y rrecados á Vizcaino para la ejecucion de lo pasado sin enviar primero á vuestra magestad el asiento y tomar orden suya porque así está dispuesto en un capitulo de las hordenanzas de nuevos descubrimientos ques en el principio. Pareció así mismo que aun capit-

ular ni hacer asiento para enviarle al consejo no se podria aora porque con Vizcaino no era razon aviendo cedula de vuestra magestad para quitarle los despachos pasados sin haver ynformado á vuestra magestad de lo que de nuevo se a entendido quanto á la mediana capacidad del subjeto y con otro no se podia contratar en derogacion del asiento primero de Vizcaino por la pretension quel tiene de que no es acabado el tiempo y fuerça del y porque luego lo havia de poner en justicia en la audiencia donde avia de ser oydo sin embargo de la cedula de vuestra magestad en que se le mandan quitar los despachos respecto de no estar ya el negocio en el principio como alla se figuraba sino metidas muchas prendas del gasto grande que Vizcaino y sus compañeros hicieron en la jornada pasada, de mas de que fundandose la cedula en mi relacion de la yncapacidad y dignidad del subjeto para el govierno y para hazerse respetar en el, pudiera alegar y ofrecerse á provar las esperiencias que a hecho en contrario para que el cumplimiento de la cedula se suspendiese hasta que vuestra magestad fuese nuevamente ynformado, visto todo esto he tenido por lo mas acertado consultar á vuestra magestad este negocio en el estado que tiene. La vez pasada solo di relacion á vuestra magestad de como avia hallado encaminada por el virrey la ejecucion de aquella jornada y que por desconfiança que yo tenia del subjeto avia comunicado con la audiencia y con algun theologo de los de mas opinion de aqui la dubda en que estava de impedirle al Vizcaino su viaje y que á todos parescio contra justicia y conciencia y que por esto lo dexe proseguir y quedava con mucho cuidado del subceso, y lo que ahora se consulta á vuestra magestad es que el subceso ynfeliz del viaje no rresulta por las rrelaciones aber nascido de yncapacidad de Vizcaino que antes mostró mediano talento y brio mas que de un mercader tan hordinario se podia esperar en semejante jornada, sino ignorancia de aquellos mares y haver dispuesto su jornada desalumbradamente en quanto al porte de los navios, multitud de la gente y cortedad de provision en algunos vastimentos y que Vizcaino pretende bolver conforme á su asiento de que envio copia con esta carta y con el ahinco y deseo que tiene de proseguir encarece mucho la largueza y ymportancia de aquella tierra contra lo que al principio escribieron y comunmente se entiende y significa grande prosperidad en la pesqueria de perlas, y en esto parece que concuerdan otras relaciones.

Esto presupuesto será vuestra magestad servido de mandar si este descubrimiento sea de proseguir, ó no, que para mas luz en ello y de su pretencion pedi á Sebastian Vizcaino el papel que aqui

va, y á Don Gabriel Maldonado, hijo de Melchior Maldonado veintiquatro de Sevilla otra que tambien envio de su pretension. Mi parecer es de que por aora no se intentase entrada en aquella tierra para á ver de pacificarlo y poblarla y que solamente para tomar buen tino y con fundamento de lo que ella es y entera seguridad de la sustancia de la pesqueria de perlas y para mayor luz de lo que toca á la defensa y seguridad de estos reynos y naos que andan en la carrera de la china se reconociese bien la pesqueria y los puertos y costas de aquella ensenada y en algunas partes la tierra de las mismas Californias y que esto fuese con poca gente en embarcaciones pequeñas y para hacerlo tengo por bastante medio el de Vizcaino porque aviendolo reconocido ya en mucha parte y experimentado lo que ubo de yerro la vez pasada lo podria enmendar mas facilmente; pero no tiene fuerzas para hacer el viaje sin costa de vuestra magestad y haviendo de ser con ella parece que seria mejor compralle á el los aparejos que tiene aunque el gasto creciese y nombrar vuestra magestad para ello á él y á otra persona que sin quedar prendada vuestra magestad por contrato lo hiciese si á esto da lugar el derecho que este hombre pretende que le resulta del asiento pasado por tiempo de algunos años. Aunque dando lugar á esto mas aprovechado medio seria cometerse á Don Gabriel Maldonado dando seguridad pues sin gasto de vuestra magestad se ofrece a hacerlo y podria llevar consigo algunos soldados ó marineros de los que llevó Vizcaino; este pide que sucediendo vien lo que ahora se hiciese fuese preferida su persona para el asiento de la pasificacion y entrada de la tierra tiene calidad y buena opinion, de cuerdo y honrado trato y quando vuestra magestad fuese servido desto podria en caso de no tener fuerzas y caudal bastante de hacienda Don Gabriel, ni poder cumplir lo que ofrece, venir desde luego proveido otro medio que tomase y en qualquiera que no aya de ser en continuacion del asiento primero de Vizcaino seria necesario para que tuviese execucion el intento enviar cedula para que la Audiencia á su pedimento y contradicion no ympidiese la jornada aunque fuese oydo en via hordinaria.

(Al margen de este capitulo se encuentra el siguiente acuerdo del consejo.)

Que se le rresponda que por lo que aqui dize y lo que se inclina al cumplimiento del asiento de Sebastian Vizcaino y por la aprobacion que hace de su capacidad y persona, parece que conviene que él continúe la jornada que ha comenzado en ejecucion de su asiento y que es lo convenido y que sea con la brevedad posible y que le ayude para ello con lo que pide en el segundo memorial que dió, ó

con lo menos de aquello que pudiere concertar y encaminar y que enbie con él religiosos de mucha aprovacion y los mas que pudiese y algunas personas cuerdas y de satisfaccion que le ayuden y que le advierta por ser ejemplo de la prudencia, consideracion y buen termino con que deve proceder, y le reprehenda las imprudencias que en el viaje pasado tuvo y particularmente el haber muerto á los yndios que en su relacion haze y haber dexado de castigar al soldado que dió con el cuento del arcabuz al yndio y que trate á los yndios con mucho amor y caricia y regalo para atraerlos de su voluntad al evangelio y no permita se les haga agravio y del que hiziere y resultase de la jornada aviese y del objeto se consulte á su magestad y que el principal intento que ha de llevar sea la conversion de los yndios.”

Ame parecido acordar á vuestra magestad con proposito de la materia que contiene el capitulo antes deste, la perdida del navio San Agustin que aviese en las primeras cartas despues que vine á este reyno y que con ella cesó el descubrimiento que venia haciendo por mandado de vuestra magestad y horden del Virrey don luis, de toda esta costa sur que tocan las naos que vienen de las Philipinas. El intento era ymportante por el fin que se llevaba en reconocer algun puerto acomodado que en caso de necesidad les pudiese ser á las naos de rreparo y abrigo. El modo de hacerse el descubrimiento pareció á todos los hombres platicos que se hubiera acertado mejor saliendo el navio de aca y siguiendo luego la misma costa: yo tendria por muy conveniente que vuestra magestad mandase que se hiciese con efecto en embarcaciones pequeñas y sin hacer caudal de lo que traxeron escripto entonces y yo envié á vuestra magestad porque no quede con satisfacion de las relaciones que tube y advierto que si esto huviese de mandarse hazer se podia incluir en ello reconocer la costa y puertos de la ensenada de la California, y tambien la pesqueria llevando algunos buzos para ella y encargandolo todo á una misma persona si en este mar y en el tiempo que se ha de hazer pareciese que lo puede cumplir y sino dividiendo este cuidado entre dos navichuelos con cabezas y aparejo conveniente y sendos barcos de conserva para lo que puede ofrecerse.

(Al margen se encuentra el siguiente acuerdo.) “Que haga executar lo del navichuelo que aqui dize se podria enbiar de acapulco á reconocer la costa sin embarazarse en lo de las Californias sino fuere de passo, y que esta diligencia se haga luego con la prevencion que conviene.”

TRANSLATION.

Paragraphs of a letter to His Majesty from the Viceroy of New Spain,¹ dated 26th November, 1597, in which he makes a report on the discussion concerning the discovery of the Californias, and its condition, and of some particulars which have recently come to light in relation thereto.

Because Your Majesty orders me, in the letters which I have received during the year, to make a report of the result attending the voyage to the Californias, and as there may come by the fleet orders touching that which should be done in this matter, it will be necessary to particularize concerning the condition of the affair and the doubts which arise in connection therewith. By the second packet, which sailed in March, as well as in the general dispatch, I gave to Your Majesty an account of the result of the expedition and, especially, of the evidence which Sebastian Vizcaino had given that, in addition to possessing a practical knowledge of the South Sea and being a man of even disposition, upright and of good intentions, he is of medium yet sufficient ability, although I had feared it was otherwise, for governing his people, and this coupled with energy enough to make himself respected by them, a thing rarely accomplished when the faculty of making authority regarded is lacking. It was on this account I said to Your Majesty, in that paragraph of the letter I wrote this year which treats of matters concerning war, that, because of this opinion which I was led to form from a knowledge of what had occurred, contrary to that which I had arrived at from previous reasoning, and because in view of his return the occasion had passed, I have made no use of the decree by which Your Majesty, after a consideration of my letters, ordered me to take away his commission from this man. Afterwards, being influenced by the fact that others were talking of a desire to make a contract, and this without my taking Vizcaino into consideration at all, I submitted the matter to this royal *audiencia* for a resolution, the *fiscal*,² who had also examined the documents at his office, being present; and, everything in relation thereto having been discussed, it was

1. The Conde de Monterey.

2. The *audiencia* was the Viceroy's council and the supreme tribunal of the viceregal government. The *fiscal* was the king's procurator.

concluded that, although it might not be feared this expedition would be made uselessly, as I wrote to Your Majesty on other occasions, I could not have it undertaken by Vizcaino, or any other person, without Your Majesty's order and the approval of the contract you might be pleased to make; for it is said that Viceroy Don Luis de Velasco did not issue the commission and give orders to Vizcaino for the performance of what has been done without first having sent the contract to Your Majesty and receiving your orders—as such is the routine called for by the first part of the ordinances relating to new discoveries. It was concluded, moreover, that even to enter into an agreement and submit the same to the Council could not now be done, since it was not right to do this so far as Vizcaino is concerned, there being a decree of Your Majesty that the authorization given to him in the past should be taken away, without first informing Your Majesty of that which has been learned of late concerning the medium capacity of this person; while a contract could not be entered into with any one else in derogation of the previous agreement made with Vizcaino, by reason of the claim he makes that, in the matter of time and the binding effect of his contract, it is operative still, and because immediately he would throw the matter into litigation in the *audiencia*, where it would be necessary to give him a hearing notwithstanding the decree of Your Majesty taking away his commission, the matter not being in its inception, as was thought, but the question of the great expense incurred by Vizcaino and his companions in the voyage which was made now forming part of it. It was considered, in addition, that, the decree being founded on my report concerning the incapacity of that person and his lack of worthiness for command and ability to make himself respected in its exercise, he could allege and offer to prove deeds of his which show the contrary, so that a compliance with the decree should be suspended until Your Majesty might be further informed. In view of all this, I have thought it better to consult Your Majesty concerning this matter in its present condition. In my last communication I gave Your Majesty an account only of the manner in which the execution of that enterprise had been commenced by the Viceroy, and of how, because of the lack of confidence in the individual which I entertained, I had conferred with the *audiencia*, and consulted a theologian of the number of those held in greatest repute here, concerning the doubt which suggested itself to me in the matter of preventing Vizcaino's voyage, and that to all it appeared to be contrary to justice and conscience to do

so;⁸ and for this reason I permitted the prosecution of the enterprise, my mind being filled with misgiving touching the result. What I now desire to lay before Your Majesty is that, as appears from the reports, the unfortunate ending of the voyage was not due to incapacity on the part of Vizcaino, who, on the contrary, gave evidence of some ability and greater spirit than could have been expected from a mere trader engaged in an enterprise of this kind, but to his lack of acquaintance with those seas and his having planned the expedition mistakenly as to the burthen of the ships, the excessive number of his crews and a scantiness in the matter of certain kinds of stores; that Vizcaino asserts his intention of going on another voyage in conformity with the provisions of his undertaking, a copy of which I send with this letter; and that, owing to the earnestness and desire shown by him for the prosecution of the enterprise, he heightens the extent and importance of that region, although it is in opposition to what was written at first and is commonly understood and indicates that great prosperity will grow out of the pearl fishery; and this, it appears, other reports confirm.

This, of course, Your Majesty will be pleased to order: Whether or not this enterprise be continued. In order to throw more light on this and on the claim of Sebastian Vizcaino, I exacted from him the accompanying document, and from Don Gabriel Maldonado, son of Melchior Maldonado, member of the municipal council of Seville, another concerning his claim, which also I send. My opinion is that for the present no expedition to that region, with intent to subject and settle it, should be attempted, but one for the purpose merely of ascertaining definitely what there is there, in order that complete assurance be had concerning the value of the pearl fishery, and that greater light may be thrown on what relates to the defense and security of these realms and the ships which make the China voyage. The condition of the fishing-grounds should be well examined and the harbors and coast of that littoral and, in some places, even the interior country of the Californias, should be thoroughly explored, and this should be done with crews few in number in vessels of little burthen. For this I think that this Vizcaino will serve sufficiently well; for, having explored already a great part of that region, and possessing a knowledge of the mistakes of the last voyage, he will the more readily avoid similar errors. But he has not means to make the voyage without aid in the cost thereof from Your Majesty; and, this aid being

8. Mere matters of the civil law were submitted to the *audiencia*; the professor of canon law gave an opinion in those pertaining to the equity side of the tribunal.

necessary, it seems to be the better plan to buy from him the outfit he has, although in so doing the outlay be augmented, and that Your Majesty appoint him and some other person for the arrangement of the matter in such a way that, while Your Majesty be not bound by a contract, it might be made, were it feasible, under the right which this man claims as resulting from the agreement made with him and still binding for a term of years. Although this be taken under consideration, the better plan would be to entrust the enterprise to Don Gabriel Maldonado, he giving security; for he offers to undertake it without expense to Your Majesty, and he could take with him some of the soldiers and sailors who accompanied Vizcaino. He asks that, if success should attend what were done now, he may be preferred in the contract for the exploration and pacification of the land. He has a good position in society and is held in good repute; is of good judgment and honorable conduct. When Your Majesty shall be pleased to give your orders respecting this matter, in case it were found that Don Gabriel had not resources and means sufficient and could not comply with what he offers to do, some other way of which advantage could be taken might then be provided for. Whatever plan be adopted, except it be for the continuation of the prior agreement made with Vizcaino, it would be necessary, in order that the intention be carried out, to send a decree, so that the *audiencia*, in case of his demand and opposition thereto, would not prevent the expedition being made, although the ordinary legal method of determining the matter were adopted.

(In the margin of this paragraph the following resolution of the council appears:)

“Let him be answered that, from what he says here, and as he is inclined to comply with the agreement made with Sebastian Vizcaino and as he approves his sufficiency and his person, it appears to be fitting that he go on with the work of the expedition which he has begun, in execution of his contract, which is confirmed; that he do this with all possible speed, and that he be aided in accordance with what he asks in the second memorial presented by him, or, at least, with so much of his demand as may be agreed upon and made operative; that there be sent with him religious of well approved character, and as many of them as possible, as well as some judicious persons of satisfactory reputation to assist him, and that he be admonished to regard them as examples of the prudence and consideration he should observe and the tact with which

he should proceed ; that he be reproved for the lack of prudence shown on his last voyage, particularly in having killed the Indians as he relates in his report and in having allowed the soldier who struck the Indian with the butt of his arquebus to go unpunished, and that he treat the Indians with great love and tenderness, making gifts to them in order to attract them in good will to the holy gospel, not permitting injury to be done to them; that he report what he may do and what the result of the expedition may be; that His Majesty be consulted in the matter, the main end he is to accomplish being the conversion of the Indians."

It seems proper that, in connection with the matters treated of in the paragraph immediately preceding this, I should recall to the attention of Your Majesty the loss of the ship *San Agustin*, which I reported in the first letters written after my arrival in this realm, and to the fact that with this event the exploration of all the southern coast, which is of interest in connection with the ships that come from the Philippines, and which was being carried on by command of Your Majesty and order of the Viceroy Don Luis, came to an end. The object was of importance, for the end sought was the survey and location of some commodious harbor which, in case of necessity, should serve these ships as a place where shelter might be had and repairs made. To all practical men it seemed that in making this exploration the better method would have been for the ship to sail from here and along the coast. I should deem it to be very fitting for Your Majesty to order that this should be done in vessels of light burthen, without considering what at that time had been written on the subject to be of importance. I sent this information to Your Majesty because I was not satisfied with the reports I had received; and I suggest that, if the order for the undertaking be given, in it may be included the matter of the exploration of the gulf of California as well as an examination of the fishing-grounds, for which purpose some divers should be taken on the ships; and that the whole be entrusted to one and the same person, if it be thought he can do what is to be done in these waters and in the time in which it has to be done ; or, if not, that the work be divided between two chiefs with two small ships properly fitted out, with staunch vessels in reserve for what may offer.

(In the margin appears the following resolution:)

"Let that which is said here concerning the ship of light burthen, which could be sent from Acapulco to explore the coast, be done ; and this without complicating the matter with what relates to the

expedition to the Californias, unless this be attended to on the way; and let this enterprise be undertaken at once with the circumspection that is proper."⁴

Document No. 13.

CARTA á S. M. de Sebastian Vizcaino, fecha en Acapulco á 5 de Mayo de 1602 manifestando que sale con las naos al descubrimiento y demarcacion de la costa desde el cabo de San Lucas á el de Mendocino.

Porque el Conde de Monterrey, Virrey de la nueva españa dará mas cumplido aviso del despacho y avio del descubrimiento de los puertos y bayas de la costa de la mar del sur hasta el cabo mendocino que se hace por horden de vuestra magestad el dicho virrey me lo a encargado en dos bageles una lancha y un barco luengo pertrechandolos con gente de mar y guerra y bastimentos para once meses todo con mucho cuidado como de tan buen gobernador zeloso del servicio de Dios y aumento de la rreal corona se esperaba. Oy domingo cinco de Mayo alas cinco me hago á la vela en el nombre de dios y de su vendita madre y de vuestra magestad muy deseoso de acertar en todo lo que se me á hordenado como leal criado y espero en su divina magestad de que se le á de hazer muy gran servicio, á vuestra magestad yre avisando siempre de lo que sucediere en este viaje á quien nuestro señor guarde por largos y felices años como todos los reynos de vuestra magestad avemos menester. de Acapulco á cinco de Mayo de mil seiscientos dos años. SEBASTIAN VIZCAINO.

TRANSLATION.

Letter to His Majesty from Sebastian Vizcaino, dated at Acapulco, 5th May, 1602, reporting that he is about to sail with his ships for the discovery and demarcation of the coast from Cape San Lúcas to Cape Mendocino.

4. This letter, and the comments thereon made in the India Council, had they been known to Mr. H. H. Bancroft's writers, would have shed considerable light on certain matters connected with Vizcaino's voyage, which those writers understood very imperfectly.